

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

14 January 2005

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information as to its strategic or tactical impact on the US Army and should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available from the [Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center](#). The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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HOT TOPICS

Control Asthma While Pregnant - New U.S. Guidelines

11 January – Reuters reported that pregnant women need to keep their [asthma](#) under control, because if they cannot breathe properly, neither can the unborn baby. Although asthma drugs may affect the developing baby, they pose less of a risk than the breathing problems caused by asthma. Asthma affects more 20 million Americans and is one of the most common potentially serious medical conditions to complicate pregnancy. The panel estimated it affects up to 8 percent of pregnant women, who may be afraid to take drugs to control their condition. Asthma is associated with increased risk of infant death, preeclampsia -- a serious condition marked by high blood pressure -- premature birth, and low birth weight. And in 30 percent of women who have mild asthma at the beginning of their pregnancy, the asthma worsens. The guidelines say that albuterol, an inhaled drug, should be used for quick relief and kept on hand. [View Article](#)

Heart Clue to Why Women Live Longer

11 January – The Guardian reported that scientists have discovered that women's hearts age better than men's. While a man's heart can lose up to a quarter of its pumping power between 18 and 70, the heart of a healthy 70-year-old woman can perform almost as well as it did when she was 20. On average, British women live five years longer than British men, and women over 60 are now the fastest-growing group in society. The researchers stressed it was not all bad news for men and that regular exercise could make a huge difference. In a related study, he found the hearts of male athletes aged 50 to 70 were as strong as those of inactive 20-year-old male university students. [View Article](#)

Maggots Are the Stars in New Ulcer Treatment

12 January – lol.co.za reported that British researchers will use maggots to treat people suffering from [leg ulcers](#) in a new test of a treatment that was used before antibiotics were introduced about 80 years ago. The University of York will run the three-year trial program which aims to help reduce the annual £600-million cost of treating leg ulcers which affect one percent of Britain's 65-million people. The study will use the principle that maggots will clean wounds by eating dead tissue. A third of patients will be treated with loose sterile maggots, a third with sterile maggots in a bag and the remainder will be given the standard treatment of hydrogel. [View Article](#)

Malaria Makes Comeback in U.S. Soldiers Returning From Afghanistan

12 January – HealthDayNews reported that [malaria](#) is cropping up again in the U.S. military. Some Army Rangers coming back from duty in Afghanistan have the disease, and medical experts cite the

same reason that may have caused malarial cases to occur with most veterans from previous wars: Soldiers simply don't stick with their regimen of medications to suppress the disease. To prevent malaria, soldiers are instructed to take antimalaria medicine. Today's soldiers are also supposed to use personal protection, such as minimizing skin exposure and using bed nets and insect repellent. Researchers collected data on 725 U.S. Army Rangers sent to eastern Afghanistan between June and September 2002. Among these subjects, 38 developed malaria. When the researchers asked how many of the soldiers maintained their regimen of medication, they found that only 52 percent took it while in Afghanistan and only 41 percent continued their treatment after returning. In addition, only 29 percent used insect repellent while in Afghanistan. [View Article](#)

Report May Lead to Changes to Water Contamination Limits

11 January – The Desert Sun reported that the tolerable level of rocket fuel in drinking water could be higher than health officials once thought. A report by the National Academy of Sciences indicates that safe levels of the chemical [perchlorate](#) could be 20 times higher than the Environmental Protection Agency has suggested in the past. The study is expected to influence state and federal regulators as they craft federal standards. Environmental and public interest groups were quick to criticize the research they said was unduly influenced by perchlorate producers and the military. Much of the debate over the chemical has centered over how much exposure it takes to impair thyroid function in humans, something that can be especially important to pregnant women and infants. [View Article](#)

WHO Says No Sign of Disease Outbreaks

11 January – The Age reported that the World Health Organisation said there were no signs of impending outbreaks of serious disease in tsunami-hit areas, but warned that the situation should be watched carefully for a month. The WHO will need one month to say with confidence that the worst is over, if there is no outbreak, the organization's southeast Asia chief, Samlee Plianbangchang, said. In Sri Lanka - the worst-hit country after Indonesia by the December 26 killer waves - cases of diarrhea have been reported but are not threatening to spread wildly. The WHO had earlier estimated that as many as 150,000 people would be at extreme risk if a major epidemic swept through affected areas. The UN agency has reported cases of diarrhea, respiratory and skin diseases and mental trauma, especially in the devastated province of Aceh in Indonesia. [View Article](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

Fatal Rat Bite Fever - Florida and Washington, 2003

7 January – MMWR reported that [rat bite fever](#) (RBF) is a rare, systemic illness caused by infection with *Streptobacillus moniliformis*. RBF has a case-fatality rate of 7-10 percent among untreated patients. *S. moniliformis* is commonly found in the nasal and oropharyngeal flora of rats. Human infection can result from a bite or scratch from an infected or colonized rat, handling of an infected rat, or ingestion of food or water contaminated with infected rat excreta. An abrupt onset of fever, myalgias, arthralgias, vomiting, and headache typically occurs within 2-10 days of exposure and is usually followed by a maculopapular rash on the extremities. This report summarizes the clinical course and exposure history of two rapidly fatal cases of RBF identified by the CDC Unexplained Deaths and Critical Illnesses (UNEX) Project in 2003. These cases underscore the importance of 1) including RBF in the differential diagnoses of acutely ill patients with reported rat exposures and 2) preventing zoonotic infections among persons with occupational or recreational exposure to rats. [View Report](#)

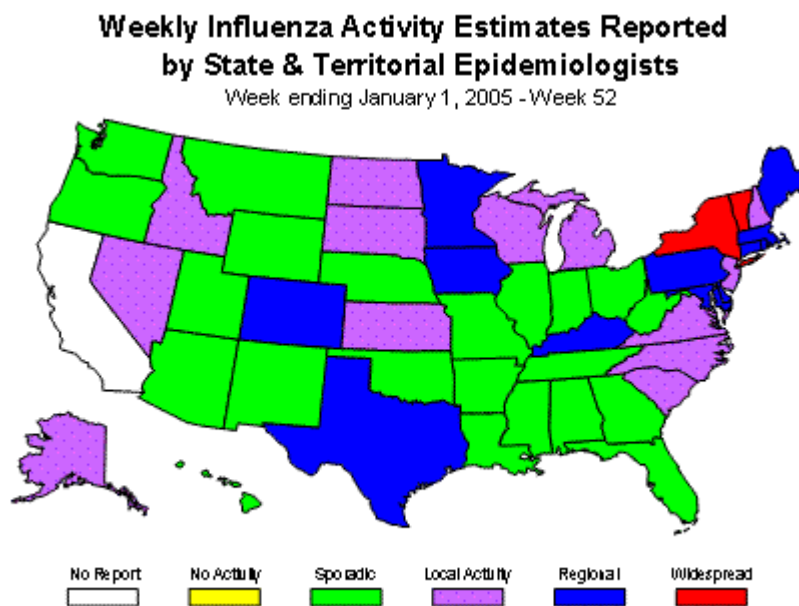
DoD-GEIS: Tsunami Assistance

11 January - DoD-GEIS partners have been alerted to be prepared to provide helpful real-time information to assist situational awareness by military medical leadership. The Naval Medical Research Unit – 2 (NAMRU-2) and the Armed Forces Research Institute for the Medical Sciences (AFRIMS) have provided local assistance to host governments, the Combined Support Force (CSF) and US Ambassadors as authorized. GEIS personnel have provided timely updates and coordination assistance. A Navy Environmental Preventive Medicine Unit (NEPMU) GEIS partner also is in SE Asia assisting locally. Naval Health Research Center (NHRC) and the Air Force Institute for Operational Health (AFIOH) are providing lab support. The GEIS central hub is providing direct connectivity at the emergency operation center Atlanta at CDC. The DoD-GEIS partner is assisting the interface and cooperation between DoD and CDC. The DoD liaison to the World Health Organizations' Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network is also providing helpful coordination and information. Information on Influenza (avian and human) including the DoD Global Influenza Program, WNV, Leishmaniasis and severe respiratory syndromes, including SARS, is available on the [DoD-GEIS website](#).

Influenza Update

CDC Weekly Influenza Report for Week Ending 1 January – Week 52

From December 26, 2004-January 1, 2005, influenza activity continued to increase mostly in the eastern United States.

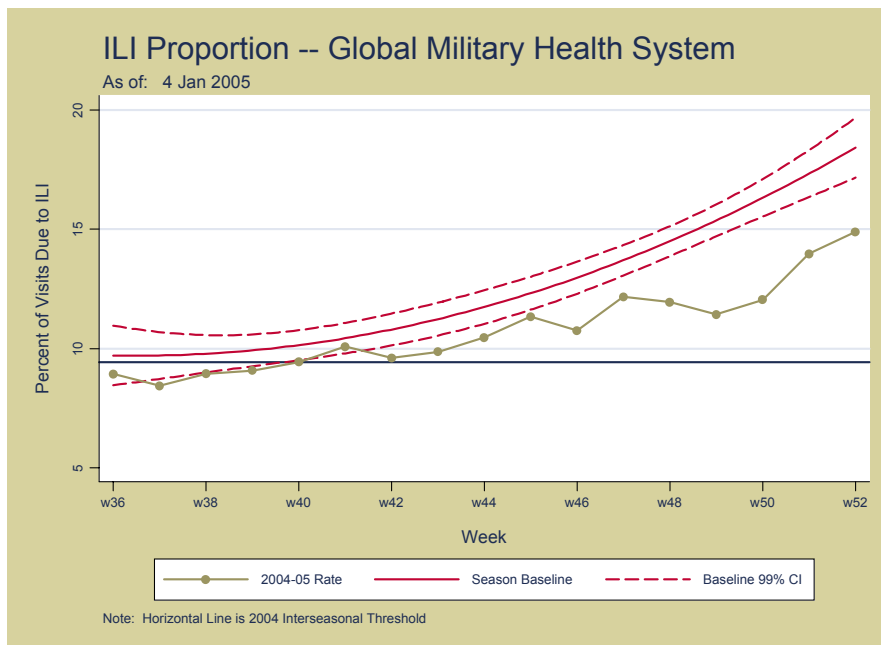


European Influenza Surveillance Scheme Report for Week Ending 2 January - Week 53

Influenza activity is gradually increasing in Europe. In Belgium and Spain the incidence of influenza-like-illness cases exceeded the baseline, but in most countries in Europe the intensity of clinical influenza activity was low (at baseline levels). Geographically, widespread activity was reported by Spain, local activity by 3/22 countries and sporadic activity by 7/22 countries. The number of laboratory confirmed cases continued to increase in Europe with 92% of total detections in week 53/2004 being influenza A virus, mainly subtype H3.

DOD Worldwide Influenza Surveillance Program for Week Ending 1 January – Week 52

Influenza-Like Illness - This graph plots the percentage of weekly outpatient visits at military installations that had an ICD-9 code correlating with Influenza-Like Illness as defined by [ESSENCE](#). Since 3 October 2004, the Epidemiological Surveillance Division (AFIOH/SDE) has processed 615 specimens as part of the influenza surveillance program. Of those specimens, 45 (7%) were positive for influenza A and 6 (1%) were positive for influenza B. In addition, 60 specimens are still being processed.



Other timely information can be found in:

The current issue of the Army Medical Surveillance Activity's [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)
This week's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Poliomyelitis Outbreak Escalates in Sudan; Case Reported in Saudi Arabia

7 January – ProMED reported that a current [polio](#) outbreak in Sudan continues to escalate. Some 105 cases have now been confirmed from 17 of the country's 26 states, since the first case was identified in Darfur in May 2004. In addition, a 2-year-old Sudanese girl from Dar Elneem district, Port Sudan, experienced onset of paralysis on 6 Nov 2004, one day after arriving in Saudi Arabia from Sudan with her family. Almost all viruses identified in 2004 in Sudan are closely genetically related to polioviruses originating in northern Nigeria and Chad. The escalating outbreak in the Sudan and the polio case in Saudi Arabia further underline the high risk posed to polio-free areas by the continuing epidemic in west and central Africa. [View Article](#)

Uzbekistan: Brucellosis

10 January – ProMED reported that a [brucellosis](#) outbreak in central Uzbekistan is linked to problems with veterinary and sanitary measures. Dr Kurbon Turdiev, a physician from a hospital in the Jizzak region, was quoted by Uzbekistan's Human Rights Society, Ezgulik, as saying that 19 people are in hospital with brucellosis. World Health Organization information said brucellosis is transmitted from animals to humans through contaminated and untreated milk and milk products or by direct contact with infected animals and animal carcasses. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Gabon: One Dead in Typhoid Fever Epidemic

7 January – ProMED reported that an unprecedented outbreak of [typhoid fever](#) has been confirmed in the northern rain forests of Gabon, causing one death so far. Around 50 cases have been reported over the past month in Oyem, a town of 35,000 people located near the northern border with Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon, following repeated breakdowns of the local water supply system. Health officials told the radio that cases had also been noted in various other towns in the Grand Nord region, which is home to 110,000 people, notably in Minvoul and Mitzic. [View Article](#)

Meningococcal Disease in Chad

12 January – ProMED reported that from 3 to 8 Jan 2005, 3 cases of [meningococcal disease](#) were reported from Brejing and Treijing refugee camps in northern Chad, with a population of about 60,000. The 3 cases were positive for *Neisseria meningitidis* W135 by latex test. Laboratory confirmation will be conducted by the WHO Collaborating Centre, Institute Medecine Tropicale des Services de Sante des Armees (IMTSSA). WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF, Medecins sans Frontieres-Holland and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) are coordinating the response to the outbreak. Emergency control measures to be implemented are case management and a mass immunization campaign, with surveillance strengthened in other camps and neighboring districts. [View Article](#)

South Africa: Measles Outbreak Hits Fish Hoek

8 January – lol.co.za reported that an outbreak of [measles](#), a disease that can be fatal, has been reported in Fish Hoek. The Western Cape department of health has urged parents to ensure that children are immunized against measles to curb the outbreak. Three cases have been confirmed and another is suspected. All are children. The Fish Hoek cases follow an outbreak in Hout Bay in November. Desai warned that older people and tourists were also at risk. People who have had measles were not likely to get it again. "We have been immunizing against measles only for the past 30 years so many people do not have the vaccine in their bodies and there are also many people crossing our borders who are not immunized," she said. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

Canada Reports Third BSE Case

11 January - CIDRAP News reported that Canada reported its third confirmed case of [bovine spongiform encephalopathy](#) (BSE), just 9 days after confirming its second case. The case was in an Alberta beef cow just under 7 years old, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) said. "No part of the animal has entered the human food or animal feed systems," the agency said. Investigators have identified the cow's birthplace and determined that it was born in March 1998—after Canada imposed its 1997 ban on the feeding of ruminant animal protein to ruminants. "Based on preliminary information, feed produced prior to the introduction of the 1997 feed ban in Canada remains the most likely source of infection in this animal," the CFIA said. All three of Canada's BSE cases have occurred in Alberta. The first was discovered in May 2003, and the second was confirmed on Jan 2 of this year. The latter involved an 8-year-old dairy cow from a farm northwest of Edmonton. The CFIA said the investigation of the latest case is independent of the probe into the second case. [View Article](#)

Dietary Guidelines Will Help Americans Make Better Food Choices

12 January - HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson and Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the release of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*, the federal government's science-based advice to promote health and reduce risk of chronic diseases through nutrition and physical activity. The sixth edition of *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* places stronger emphasis on reducing calorie consumption and increasing physical activity. This joint project of the Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture is the latest of the five-year reviews required by federal law. "These new *Dietary Guidelines* represent our best science-based advice to help Americans live healthier and longer lives," Secretary Thompson said. Secretary Veneman said, "Taken together, the recommendations will help consumers make smart choices from every food group, get the most nutrition out of the calories consumed and find a balance between eating and physical activity." [View Press Release](#) [View the 2005 Dietary Guidelines](#)

Doctors Account for Most of Toxin Used in Improper Anti-Wrinkle Shots

B13 January 13 – Sun-Central.com reported that South Florida doctors said they have accounted for at least 43 of the 51 vials of unapproved [anti-wrinkle shots](#) shipped to them by an Arizona company that was ordered to recall them this week. Eleven of 13 medical offices named as buying the toxin said they have already used the shots or discarded them after seeing the label "not for human use." The toxin came to light in the November botulism poisoning of four people at an Oakland Park clinic. The four were paralyzed by highly concentrated research toxin from a California firm, but federal agents found records showing the clinic, Advanced Integrated Medical Center, also bought four vials of TRI's toxin. Dr. Jean Malecki, director of the Palm Beach County Health Department, earlier had warned the public to avoid getting wrinkle shots until all TRI toxin was accounted for. Since then, doctors who bought 43 of the vials said they have already used it on themselves, staffers and relatives -- with no adverse effects -- or discarded it after realizing it was unapproved. They said none went to patients. Experts suggest patients ask doctors to see the Botox vial before getting shots. [View Article](#)

Eight are Killed in Train Crash and Gas Leak

7 January – ProMED reported that at least eight people died and more than 200 were treated at hospitals after a 42-car freight train crashed into a smaller one and leaked [chlorine gas](#) in Graniteville, South Carolina. Most of the injured were residents suffering from respiratory difficulty, said Thom

Berry, a spokesman for the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Gov. Mark Sanford declared a state of emergency for Aiken County, S.C., and officials told residents within a mile of the crash site to leave. The national news reported the evacuation of 5400 people. Area residents went to 2 local schools, where paramedics evaluated them and sent many to hospitals, where more than 50 were admitted. The authorities did not immediately release the identities of the dead or the causes of their deaths. The cause of the crash was not known. [View Article](#)

EPA Finds Potential Teflon Chemical Risks

12 January - The Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported that the Environmental Protection Agency is considering whether there is "a potential risk of developmental and other adverse effects" from exposure to low levels of a chemical used in making the nonstick substance Teflon. EPA officials emphasized, however, that the agency's draft assessment of the potential risks of [perfluorooctanoic acid](#) and its salts, known as PFOA, or C-8, is preliminary. The report, based on animal studies, is being sent to outside experts for helping in resolving scientific issues in order to determine the potential risks. While PFOA is used to make Teflon, it is not present in Teflon itself, which is applied to cookware, clothing, car parts and flooring. [View Article](#)

Toddler Vaccinations A Bright Spot in Flu Season

7 January - CIDRAP News reported that the new recommendation to vaccinate children between 6 and 23 months old could have been lost in the hubbub of the [influenza vaccine](#) shortage this season. Yet authorities are terming this year's vaccination rates a success story. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta (CDC) reported that 36.6% of children younger than 2 had received flu shots. The use of some other vaccines for preschool children was lower in the first year. Hepatitis B had an 8% rate its first year, varicella had 16%, and pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) saw about 40% vaccination coverage among those eligible, according to CDC data. Three major factors could have influenced the flu vaccination rate, experts suggested: ongoing education for providers about the need to vaccinate, a good supply of vaccine for the age-group, and an unusual number of flu-related deaths among children last season. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

Deadly Bacterial Outbreak Sets Philippine Resort City on Edge

10 January – Yahoo! News reported that a deadly bacteria that may have killed up to 28 people in recent months has set the northern Philippines resort city of Baguio on edge, threatening the region's vital tourism industry. An outbreak of [meningococemia](#) has sparked panic and speculation as national and local governments, aided by the World Health Organization (WHO) struggle to control the sickness. Baguio Mayor Braulio Yaranon has tapped a special fund to buy medicines, laboratory equipment and other supplies to fight the disease. Almost 60 suspected cases of meningococemia have been detected in the Philippines since last year with about 90 percent of the cases in Baguio. Twenty-eight deaths in Baguio are believed to have been due to the disease since March last year. However, due to the difficulty of testing for the disease, "only five actual cases have been confirmed with only three deaths," Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said. The Philippines normally suffers 80 to 120 isolated cases of meningococemia each year but the outbreak in Baguio was unusual as the disease had not previously been detected there before last year, experts said. [View Article](#)

Fight against Disease Falters in Sri Lanka

10 January – The International Herald Tribune reported that Carmen Ramírez de la Pistina, a physician from Spain who works for the aid group Médecins Sans Frontières, was speaking to exhausted health officials here in southeastern Sri Lanka and suggesting that they could do even more to forestall an epidemic in local refugee camps. Now that two weeks have passed since the tsunamis, she said, disease and even more death "can explode in front of us." Sri Lanka has a strong health care system, reflected in low infant mortality and long life expectancy, and health specialists say the country's doctors and health officials have averted a medical disaster by setting up the camps quickly and running them well, particularly in providing clean drinking water immediately. Now Ramírez de la Pistina was noting a weakness in the system. Here and there, cases of diarrhea have occurred, but camp records did not provide enough detail to tell if a deadly disease like cholera or typhoid might be at work. It is essential to detect such problems early for doctors to stop an infectious disease from sweeping through a camp. More than 500,000 people have been displaced, the Ministry of Health said. Many thousands have left the camps to live with relatives or go home, but many more have nowhere to go. For them, life in the camps will drag on for weeks and months. Keeping them healthy will be an enormous challenge to the health care system. Infectious disease is a constant threat, and officials have their hands full trying to keep it at bay. [View Article](#)

Health Officials Move to Stop Signs of Bird Flu in the South

8 January – Viet Nam News reported that protecting people from a new outbreak of [avian flu](#) is the most significant health care challenge presently facing Viet Nam as an increasing number of poultry have recently been reported as infected with the disease in the Cuu Long (Mekong) Delta region and southern provinces. A meeting was held to call for intensified measures to prevent the bird flu outbreak from entering Ho Chi Minh (HCM) City. The city has nearly 796,000 poultry, excluding 30,000 poultry and 600,000 eggs transported from other locations to the city each day. The city has 50 poultry slaughter houses, seven of which are in city markets. The Animal Health department suggested that the city immediately close illegal abattoirs and fine them harshly. It urged measures to intensify supervision of poultry processing and trading units, all of which are obliged to ensure hygiene and safety in food sources. The Deputy Director of the HCM Health Department said that the city's hospitals have received five patients with pneumonia from other provinces as of Thursday. Two of the patients, one of whom died, were tentatively identified as infected with H5N1, the lethal strain of avian flu. Quick tests on a 13-year-old patient admitted to the Hospital for Tropical Diseases from Tra Vinh Province on Wednesday proved negative, said Giang, so the latest suspected case of bird flu is an 18-year-old girl from Tien Giang. [View Article](#)

Malaysia: Dengue Outbreak Likely

8 January – The Star reported that a [dengue](#) outbreak is expected to hit Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Penang and Pahang in the next month or two as the number of cases have increased. Health Minister Datuk Dr. Chua Soi Lek said last month about 1,000 cases were reported in a week. "This figure is very high compared with about 450 cases which were reported in a week before December," he said. He said the Kuala Lumpur Hospital recorded 250 cases a week compared with 100 cases previously. He said that in Selangor it jumped from 102 to 350 cases, Penang (from 20 to 50 cases) and Pahang (from 30 to 80 cases). "We are worried as mosquitoes breed faster during frequent downpours followed by sunshine," he said. [View Article](#)

Two Tsunami Survivors Have Measles

10 January – Yahoo! News reported that the World Health Organization confirmed two unconnected cases of [measles](#) in tsunami survivors on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, and health workers quickly vaccinated more than 1,000 people to head off the spread of the virus. The cases occurred in separate villages outside the regional capital of Banda Aceh, the area hit hardest by the 6 December earthquake and tsunami. The U.N. children's agency, UNICEF, already was in the midst of a campaign to vaccinate 600,000 people in devastated Sumatra against the disease when the cases occurred, and it immediately inoculated a ring of 1,200 people living around the villages where each case was confirmed. Measles is one of the most contagious viruses. In the developing world, it kills between 3 percent and 5 percent of children who contract it. In Aceh province, only about 25 percent of the children were vaccinated before the earthquake, said Dr. Georg Petersen, WHO's representative in Indonesia. [View Article](#)

Vietnam Reports Third Avian Flu Death

11 January – The International Herald Tribune reported that a 16-year-old Vietnamese girl who was battling [avian flu](#) has died; the country's third casualty in two weeks. With Asia's death toll from the deadly bird flu strain now at 35, Vietnamese officials said another patient has been infected by the virus. Le Truong Giang, deputy director of Ho Chi Minh City's health department, said Monday that the girl from the southern province of Tay Ninh died on Saturday in the city's hospital after fighting the virus since late last month. He also said tests last week confirmed that an 18-year-old girl who was transferred on 6 January to the same hospital from the Mekong Delta had also contracted the strain. The disease has wiped out about 17 percent of Vietnam's poultry industry. The virus was found last Saturday in the Mekong Delta province of Kien Giang, which borders Cambodia. About 2,500 birds were destroyed, and 15 provinces and cities are now infected by the disease. The head of Kien Giang's animal health department said poultry smuggling from Cambodia has not been controlled. [View Article](#)

Yunnan Guards Against Bird Flu Intrusion

9 January – The China Daily reported that southwest China's Yunnan Province, which borders Vietnam, has taken a series of emergency measures to prevent [bird flu](#) in Vietnam from spreading into China. All major transportation lines, poultry farms, regions on the Sino-Vietnam border and places which were hit by bird flu outbreak early last year have been urged to inject vaccine on poultry. The provincial government has urged local agricultural, health, import and export quarantine, public security, quality inspection departments and customs officers to work together to monitor possible spread of bird flu and distribution of poultry and egg products in Yunnan. Anyone who causes the spread of bird flu as result of dereliction of duty will be punished harshly. The local animal husbandry department has set up a 30-km-wide "immune protection zone" in the border area neighboring Vietnam and set up disinfecting stations at the frontier passages and border ports to make thorough check and disinfect all vehicles and personnel passing by. The relapse of bird flu has been seen in 11 localities of Vietnam since December last year. [View Article](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Cattle Dead, Humans Ill from Foot-And-Mouth in Peru

7 January – Reuters stated that Peru reported an outbreak of the contagious [foot-and-mouth cattle disease](#) -- its first in six months -- and said nine cattle had died and 10 people were infected. Peru's National Service of Agrarian Health (SENASA) said the Sama valley on Peru's southern coast where the outbreak occurred was sealed off and the situation was under control. "There are some 2,600 animals in the valley and not more than 60 animals are at risk," said SENASA's Director Oscar Dominguez told Reuters. SENASA has sent 4,000 vaccination doses to the valley to contain the disease and did not plan to slaughter animals. Edgar Tejada, director of health services in the southern department of Tacna bordering Chile said, "Since Jan 3, we have registered 10 cases (of infection in humans) from handling tainted meat and meat products." Seven people have been hospitalized but their condition is improving, he said. The disease is mild in humans, typically creating flu-like symptoms and mouth blisters. [View Article](#)

Please contact us to comment on or suggest improvements to this report.

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